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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8009th meeting of the Security Council, held on 24 July 2017, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and welcomes the briefing on 13 July 2017 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative and looks forward to efforts to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and good offices, subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, as well as the promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights, humanitarian access and assistance and gender mainstreaming.

"The Security Council welcomes the recent positive political developments in several West African countries, in particular the peaceful transition of power in The Gambia and the holding of free and transparent legislative elections on 6 April 2017. In this regard, the Security Council commends the diplomatic efforts by ECOWAS Heads of State, supported by the SRSG, on the basis of Security Council resolution 2337 (2017), resulting in the peaceful transition of power to the democratically elected President Adama Barrow.

"The Security Council encourages bilateral and multilateral partners to provide appropriate support to the efforts of the Government of The Gambia to restore the rule of law, reconciliation, and development for the citizens of The Gambia.

"The Security Council reiterates its concern over the situation in Guinea-Bissau, calls upon all political leaders to uphold the provisions of the Conakry Accords, and commends the efforts of ECOWAS to help find a way out of the political crisis.

"The Security Council welcomes the notable progress made by Côte d'Ivoire to consolidate lasting peace and stability, as well as economic prosperity, following the closure of the United Nations Operation in Côte

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d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on 30 June 2017 and underlines the need for UNOWAS to have a proactive engagement during the transition plan period. In this regard, the Security Council reiterates its request in resolution 2284 (2016) and its S/PRST/2017/08 that the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) make available its good offices, as necessary, to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Resident Coordinator and underscores the importance of continued support to Côte d'Ivoire during its transition process beyond UNOCI.

"The Security Council takes note of the adoption by ECOWAS Ministers on 10 February of four key documents to advance gender mainstreaming and the meaningful inclusion of women in political, peace and security processes.

"The Security Council expresses its concerns over the threats of terrorism, including widespread terrorist ideology in the region and their linkages to transnational organized crime, as well as the worsening humanitarian situation in the region. In this regard, the Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, in particular in Northern and Central Mali and the Lake Chad Basin region, notably by Boko Haram and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Security Council stresses the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The Security Council expresses particular concern about attacks on civilians, who are the primary victims of this terrorist violence.

"The Security Council welcomes the subregional, regional and international efforts to mitigate the security, humanitarian and development consequences of Boko Haram's operations. The Security Council takes note of the progress made in the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and urges the Member States participating in the MNJTF to further enhance regional military cooperation and coordination, deny haven to Boko Haram and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, secure the conditions to enable humanitarian access and facilitate the restoration of civilian security and the rule of law in liberated areas. The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular, international human rights laws, international refugee laws and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council encourages Member States and multilateral partners to lend their support to the MNJTF to ensure its full operationalization, including the provision of modalities to increase the timely and effective exchange of intelligence to further the region's collective efforts to combat Boko Haram, whenever possible and appropriate. The Security Council underscores the importance of a holistic approach to degrade and defeat Boko Haram and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, whenever possible and appropriate, that includes coordinated security operations, conducted in accordance with applicable international law, as well as enhanced civilian efforts by regional governments to improve governance, re-establish schools and promote economic growth in the affected areas.

"The Security Council reiterates deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation caused by the activities of Boko Haram and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in the Lake Chad Basin region, in particular grave food insecurity and potential famine in some areas. In this regard, the Security Council calls on the international community to immediately support the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance for the people most affected by the crisis in

Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, including by fulfilling the United Nations appeal for the Lake Chad Basin region. It also urges regional governments to facilitate access for humanitarian organizations and to work with the United Nations and international partners to develop viable options for delivering aid.

"The Security Council welcomes the $458 million for humanitarian assistance pledged at the Oslo conference for 2017 and urges swift disbursement of these funds to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis and to begin to address endemic development needs and strongly encourages all other non-traditional donors to contribute in line with the needs highlighted in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plans of each country.

"The Security Council further welcomes the Government of Nigeria's announcement of its 2017 spending plans for northeast Nigeria which project total federal and state government expenditure of $1 billion on development and humanitarian activities, and urges swift implementation of these plans.

"The Security Council expresses continued concern about piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the trafficking of drugs and other illicit goods, the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking and stresses the need to strengthen the fight against illicit activities in the subregion in accordance with applicable international law.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region and encourages further collaboration between Member States, regional and subregional organizations, relevant United Nations entities and with other relevant stakeholders to enhance social cohesion and to address challenges to good governance.

"The Security Council commends the engagement of UNOWAS with subregional and regional organizations, in particular, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Group of 5 for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Mano River Union, in order to promote peace and stability in West Africa and the Sahel. The Security Council remains committed to working closely with these organizations through UNOWAS to strengthen subregional and regional cooperation to address cross-border security threats and prevent the spread of terrorism. In that respect, they welcome the assistance of UNOWAS to the efforts of the ECOWAS Commission to implement its Regional Framework for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance and to promote a coordinated SSR approach in the region.

"The Security Council notes the collaboration undertaken between UNOWAS and the Peacebuilding Commission and encourages continued close and effective cooperation in support of sustainable peace in the region.

"The Security Council commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States in West Africa and the Sahel to strengthen border security and regional cooperation, including through the G5 Sahel and the Nouakchott process on the enhancement of the security cooperation and the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahel and Sahara region.

"The Security Council acknowledges the impact of the situation in Mali on the regional peace and security in the Sahel, West Africa and North African region and welcomes in this regard the deployment of the FC-G5S throughout

the territories of its contributing countries, with up to 5,000 military and police personnel, with a view to restoring peace and security in the Sahel region.

"The Security Council also welcomes the financial support to the G5 Sahel force (FC-G5S) including, as noted in operative paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 2359.

"The Security Council encourages further progress by the implementation of the UNISS, including through support to the G5, in order to assist in addressing the security and political challenges to the stability and development of the Sahel region and reaffirms its continued commitment to address such challenges, which are interrelated with humanitarian and development issues as well as the adverse effects of climate and ecological changes, and, in this regard, highlights the need for adequate risk assessments and risk management strategies relating to climate change impacts.

"The Security Council expresses its support for SRSG Chambas and for the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), in their efforts to implement the UNISS. In this regard, the Council takes note of the UNISS Steering Committee meeting of 5 May 2017 to discuss ways to fast-track the recommendations of the independent review of the UNISS, and expresses concerns over lack of funds that has hampered the implementation of three important flagship projects, notably 'Support for Resilient Pastoralism', 'Strengthening the resilience of mobile populations and vulnerable communities' and 'Accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women to increase resilience in the Sahel'.

"The Security Council welcomes the efforts of UNOWAS to coordinate with countries of the region and all stakeholders, and to provide strategic leadership, guidance and direction to the United Nations system for the effective implementation of the UNISS, including its thematic focus, coordination arrangements, partnerships and distribution of responsibilities among United Nations entities in the field and at Headquarters and reiterates the importance of the continuing UNOWAS collaborative engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Security Council emphasizes in this context the importance that the United Nations and its partners enhance their programmatic capacity and focus to address cross-border challenges with a view to encouraging deeper integration and cooperation among the countries of Sahel. The Security Council reiterates, in this regard, the importance of continuing UNOWAS collaborative engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission drawing on its convening role for achieving greater coherence and deeper financial and political commitments from the United Nations and its partners in the region.

"The Security Council requests UNOWAS to continue to monitor progress made in the implementation of the UNISS and to provide, in its next report, detailed information, in particular, on its efforts and initiatives to sustaining international engagement and develop programmatic coherence in the implementation of the UNISS, including through ensuring attention to all its pillars, and funding gaps, as well as streamlining and coordination of initiatives by international and regional actors in the Sahel region."